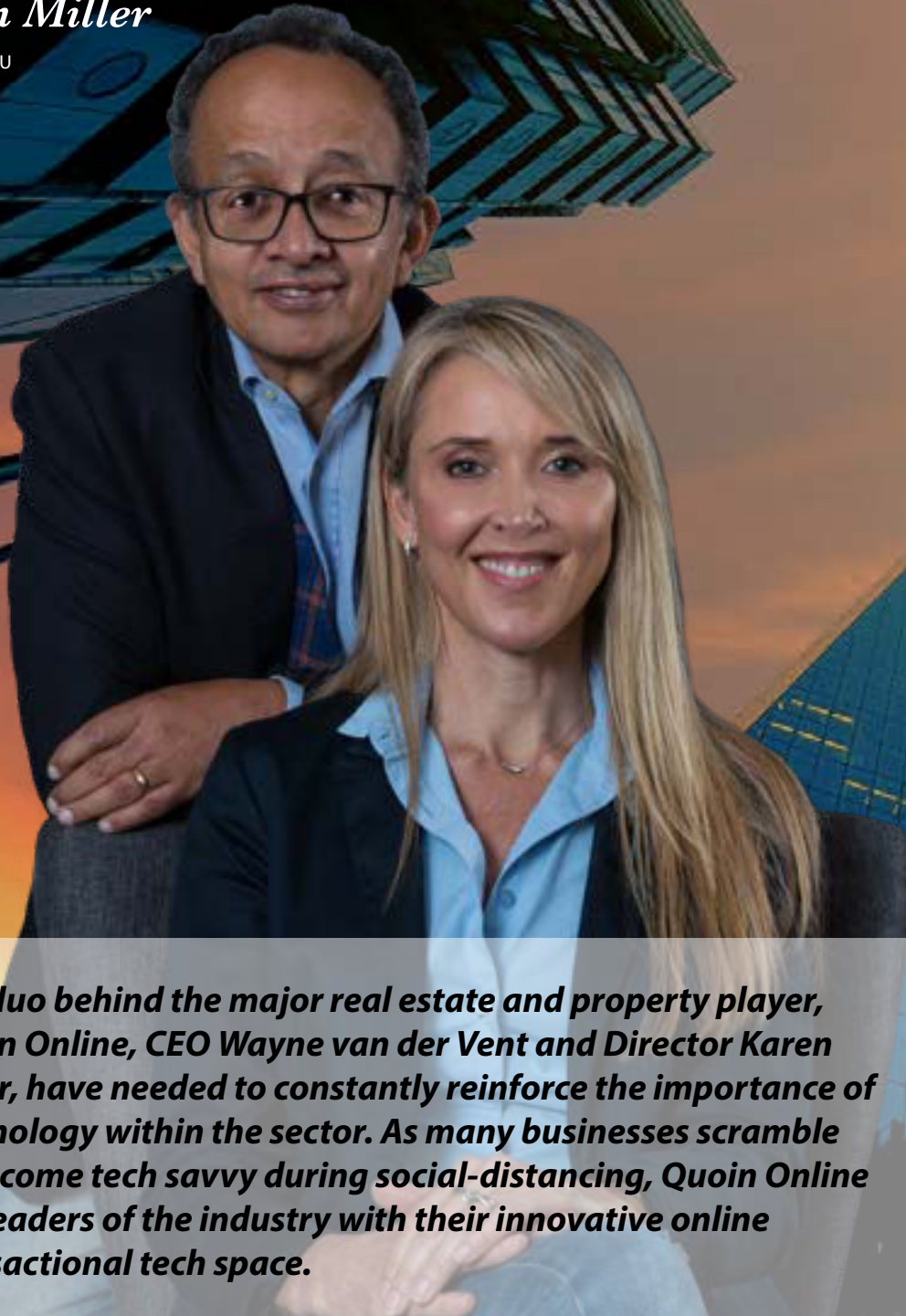


# Innovate, Lead & Deliver

*With Wayne van der Vent & Karen Miller*

SIDIMA MFEKU



**The duo behind the major real estate and property player, Quoin Online, CEO Wayne van der Vent and Director Karen Miller, have needed to constantly reinforce the importance of technology within the sector. As many businesses scramble to become tech savvy during social-distancing, Quoin Online are leaders of the industry with their innovative online transactional tech space.**

Just when you think you have seen it all and found your groove, things change and it's time to move from your comfort zone. The current Covid-19 pandemic is an example. While I've been in the industry for almost thirty years, and have managed my way through many changes, this current time presents a completely new frame of reference, and opportunity to further test our ability to find creative solutions."

Quoin CEO, Wayne van der Vent, entered the property industry in the 1990s as an in-house legal counsel at Monex Development. It was the first of his many other interventions and projects in the property sector, as his involvement in the industry was a case of being "in the right place at the right time," as he puts it.

***"While it is important to use tech to improve efficiencies, a big part of property is also entrepreneurial, and tech cannot replace that."***

"Two days after joining Monex Development in 1991 as an in-house legal counsel to focus on leases and such, I was sent to Port Elizabeth to assist with the redevelopment of Cleary Park shopping centre, in the northern part of PE. At the time I didn't realise I was playing a small part in making retail property history as this was among the first large shopping centres to be built in a previously disadvantaged community," He says.

"From there my interest grew in the sector and I joined Property Asset Managers and built portfolios for township shopping centres on behalf of Futuregrowth Asset Management. I remained with Futuregrowth and grew the fund to 48 township shopping centres, across the length and breadth of South Africa."

"On a personal level, I consider one of my most significant professional achievements the development of a funding product to develop shopping centres in townships and being the first to offer a socially responsible property product to the pension and investment industry"

Ready for a new challenge Wayne joined the Public Investment Corporation in 2005 and grew the portfolio to R50 billion in five years. At the same time he became Chairman of the commercial board for the Airports Company of SA and managed the rebuilding of all the airports in preparation of the 2010 World Cup Soccer Tournament.

But, for Wayne van der Vent's partner in business, Quoin Online's Director Karen Miller, her entry into the property sector came a little while after competing her honours degree in tourism management. "After having completed my honors in Tourism Management, I was employed for 9 years by American Express Travel as a Business development manager, implementing and managing the financial and operational aspects of various corporate, institutional and government travel accounts and in-house travel agencies. A friend enticed me into the property industry."

**WAYNE VAN DER VENT**

**Position:** CEO & Co-Founder

**Company:** Quoin Online

**Years company has operated:** 5

**Age:** 55

**Marital Status/Family:** Married, 3 children

**Books currently reading:**  
With lockdown, everything & anything

**KAREN MILLER**

**Position:** Principal & Co-Founder

**Company:** Quoin Online

**Years company has operated:** 5

**Age:** 44

**Marital Status/Family:** Married, 2 daughters & a son

**Books currently reading:**  
The book of Joy by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Archbishop, Desmond Tutu & Douglas Abrams

**Life Motto:**  
I have two: Life begins at the end of your comfort zone & Don't let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice – Steve Jobs

"I started off with Seeff for 18 months in residential property at the V&A Waterfront Marina in Cape Town, which is Cape Town's most exclusive real estate. After selling the last block of 30 luxury apartments built in the Marina directly from the developer (V & A) to an international investor, I realised I there was not much further growth for me in this sector."

"I'm proud of having spearheaded the acquisition of the V&A Waterfront from Dubai World, an endeavour which taught me that patience is key, and that anything is possible if you have the will and means to do it. I was Chairman of ACSA and within two years we had managed to redevelop and build a whole new airport in Durban. This taught me that with the right skills and motivation, anything is possible."

Indeed, anything is possible when you seize opportunities and have the right partner at your side. Especially when these opportunities arise in the most unlikely of places. Miller says: "Wayne and I had daughters in the same class, and when he resigned from his latest job, we both realised that there was a lack of due diligence and financial information which underpinned an investment, made available to buyers before submission to offers."